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XXXI. *An Account of the Mission of Yusuf Agha, Ambassador from Turkey to the British Court. Written by himself, and translated from the Turkish by the Ritter JOSEPH VON HAMMER, F.M.R.A.S.*

Read the 19th of May 1832.

TUESDAY, the 8th of *Rajab* 1209 (29th January 1795), having been fixed upon for delivering, with splendour and ceremony, the imperial letters and presents entrusted to me, the شالیمیر, or officer acting as master of the ceremonies, and the secretary to the KING, waited upon us three days previous, and announced that they had His Majesty's commands to regulate the forms and ceremonies of the audience, and that they were most anxious to do every thing in their power to honour and oblige us.

Barges having been prepared for our passage up the Thames, we begged to be favoured with a journey by land, as the winter was uncommonly severe, and the greater part of the river was frozen over, on which account the way by water would be attended with many inconveniences and difficulties. Our wishes were complied with, and it was intimated that a field-marshall\* was appointed by the king to prepare refreshments for us at Chelsea (which is an hour's distance from London, situated on the river Thames); that we should there find infantry and cavalry; that the field-marshall would come to meet us at the aforesaid palace, and declare his satisfaction in having been appointed to so honourable and distinguished a service; that a royal carriage with six horses would be sent for us, another for the secretary, the bearer of the Imperial credentials, and two others empty, to dignify our procession; that carriages would also be sent from Her Majesty the QUEEN, and His Royal Highness the Prince of WALES (heir to the throne), from the second and third sons of the KING, from his brother, and from other great lords, and in each of them an honourable person, making altogether about twenty carriages; that the first chamberlain of the Prince of WALES, my Lord JERSEY, had been appointed our *mihmándár*; that on the day

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\* Field-marshall Sir GEORGE HOWARD, Governor of Chelsea College.

appointed, at ten o'clock, according to the European time, that is to say two hours before noon, we should arrive at the palace, partake there, with the great men commissioned for that purpose, of refreshments which would be prepared for us, and then continue our course; that we should adorn the horses sent as presents, and let them be led before us; that, proceeding with dignity and solemnity from the palace at Chelsea, we should at one o'clock arrive at the king's palace, where another *mihmándár*, a lord, would come to meet us, and conduct us to the rooms prepared for our reception, whence, after a short repast, we should proceed with a dignified step to deliver the imperial letters. All this was fixed and arranged by verbal communications. The following day a letter arrived from the field-marshal, acquainting us that he had been appointed by the king to make the arrangements, and to prepare the refreshments, for our honourable reception; that this commission was to him the source of honour and happiness; that at the appointed hour he should arrive at the above-mentioned palace; and that, with God's assistance, he would use every effort in his power to receive us in an honourable manner; and concluded his letter with wishes for the lasting greatness of the Sublime Porte.

The first chamberlain of the king informed us that it would be advisable to send the presents; that is, the *poghcheh*,\* or shawl stuffs, and such like things, the jewelled aigrettes, pistols, and packets of coffee to the king's palace, a day before the audience. In compliance with this intimation, the above-mentioned presents were sent on Wednesday afternoon, with the lists containing their names and descriptions: they were put into carriages, and conveyed by our first interpreter to the first chamberlain. Early next morning (Thursday), the horses, brought as presents, were sent, accompanied by our men, to the palace at Chelsea, to be adorned and ready by the time of our arrival.

At the proper time, the humble writer of this memoir, accompanied by his secretary and interpreter, entered the carriages; and as soon as we came near the palace, the cavalry, which was drawn up in two lines, unfurled their colours, when the sounds of the music pierced the seven heavens. As we approached the gate of the palace, the infantry paid us similar honours. We passed through the streets they formed for us; and on arriving at the

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\* *پوچه* means a bundle of shawls or stuffs wrapped up in a handkerchief.

palace, we were received by the field-marshall and the other officers. Having entered the room, the field-marshall read a paper, the contents of which, as explained by our interpreter, were as follows :

“ I, who am the commander of this delightful palace, which has been built for the gallant warriors who, exerting themselves with the utmost bravery in battle, prove their courage and zeal by the sacrifice of their persons, consider it as the highest honour and happiness to have been appointed by His Majesty the KING in a manner so incomparable\* and auspicious, to do the honours of hospitality to your Excellency the ambassador from the Sublime Porte. May God Almighty, who fulfils all desires, prosper the affairs of commerce, which are calculated to increase the good understanding and harmony that exist between the two courts ; and may His Providence possess your Excellency’s heart with peace and comfort ! ”

To this, we replied in the following speech :—“ Agreeably to the sincere friendship and good understanding existing between His Majesty and the most glorious, most powerful, and most generous PÁDISHÁH, the refuge of the world, our gracious Lord has been pleased to strengthen the relations of commerce, by which the inhabitants of the two countries must be more closely united to each other ; *bye-and-bye* † you will, with God’s assistance, see the fruits, proving that the Sublime Porte refuses nothing to the English. We consider it as a particular favour of His Majesty the KING, that you, my friend, have been appointed to receive us ; we are gratified by it, and entertain the best wishes for your lasting health and welfare.”

After this answer, our *mihmándár*, Lord JERSEY, came to invite us, and announced his commission by saying, “ I am commanded to deliver to your Excellency the following message from His Majesty, the most illustrious and puissant king, my gracious lord, which he was pleased to declare verbally : “ As the most perfect friendship and harmony reigns between us and the most illustrious, most noble, and most courageous PÁDISHÁH of the

\* مثل نا مسلوک.

† رفته رفته. It seems the ambassador was aware that “ *bye-and-bye* ” was a phrase that would please the English ; because, in a campaign in which both nations had fought together, *bye-and-bye* was the constant reply of the Turkish soldiers and marines, when roused and pressed by the English sailors and soldiers, crying, *Háidch ! háideh !* “ Go on ! go on ! ” Thus each of the two nations first learnt from each other the phrase most congenial to their character—the English that of *activity*, the Turks that of *tardiness*.

*Islám* and SHÁHINSHÁH (king of kings), his choice of an ambassador to this country affords us the highest pleasure and satisfaction.'” He added, that he esteemed himself fortunate in having been honoured with such a commission.

We replied in the following words:—“ The true friendship existing between the Sublime Porte and England is generally known; and the sincere wishes of His Majesty, the most glorious, most noble and puissant PÁDISHÁH, my most gracious lord and master, to strengthen this mutual friendship, are manifested by this extraordinary embassy. We are much flattered by His Majesty's expression of satisfaction towards the Sublime Porte, and our mission, and that this message has been communicated through you we consider a distinguished favour. May you continue to enjoy good health, and may you have long life.”

After this we partook of the prepared repast, which consisted of sweet-meats, fruit, and coffee. The horses being prepared, the men of our suite dressed, and notice being given that every thing was ready, we delivered the imperial credentials (after having kissed them with the most profound respect and reverence) into the hands of the secretary. Those who were present accompanied us as far as the carriages. We were seated on the right; on our left was the *mihmándár*, opposite to us the officer acting as master of ceremonies, and our interpreter. We wore the great turban called *khorásáni*,\* and our dress was a sable robe. Eight of our servants with shawl girdles walked beside our carriage, and four others beside the carriage in which the imperial credentials were conveyed. The lead was taken by the carriage of my lord, the Secretary of State; behind which, mounted on a well caparisoned horse, was one of our men acting as master of the horse, and dressed in scarlet with gold buckles, followed by the horses for presents, all richly caparisoned, led on at a slow pace, and snorting and prancing at every step they took. After them followed the humble writer of this memoir, in the royal carriage; then the carriage of the secretary of the embassy with the imperial credentials, the two spare royal carriages, those of the QUEEN, of the Prince of WALES, of his brother the Duke of YORK, of his younger brother the Duke of CLARENCE, and of the KING's brother the Duke of GLOUCESTER, having an honourable person in each of them, and the whole moving in procession.† Next, in a carriage

\* خراسانی.

علي التوالى بر بر يني والي و تالي +

and six, followed the young gentlemen of our suite, and our second interpreter GLIGORASCO ; after them, about twenty carriages of the nobility. The whole was accompanied by a squadron of hussars ; and to prevent the pressure of the crowd, and to preserve the order of the procession, two hundred officers of police, with sticks in their hands, marched on the right and left, clearing the road, and thus the whole train moved in great pomp and state. The cavalry drawn up on both sides, and the officers of police walking on foot used every exertion to shew their zeal, and perform their respective functions. Those who looked on were amazed and astonished ; yet without the least hindrance from the immense crowd, we arrived at the garden of the KING, called St. James's Park. Here is the palace of the QUEEN, from the windows of which, the KING, the QUEEN, the PRINCESSES and their relatives were looking at the procession. As they had never before seen horses so richly dressed and caparisoned, they were extremely pleased, and had the horses led near the palace windows, in order to have a better view of them. This stopped the carriages for a few minutes, after which they moved again. Coming out by the gate of the garden called the Green Park, we came into the high road called Piccadilly, and in regular order, to the gate of St. James's Palace. Here the horses were sent away to their places, and we were met by the secretary of His Majesty the KING (Secretary of State), and the second *mihmándír*, my Lord Bosco,\* who conducted us to a room, where we rested. Here were drawn up the officerst of the palace (the Guards), who, as we passed between them, paid us obeisance (presented arms).

All this time the imperial credentials (the source of favour) were in the hands of our secretary of the embassy. After the lapse of a quarter of an hour, one of the lords came to invite us to the room of the *diván* (state apartment), where the king was seated on a seat of red velvet, appropriated to himself alone, and where all the great men and ministers, and the foreign envoys, were assembled in the form of a *diván*. When he had delivered his message, another lord came to arrange the gentlemen of our suite. These were followed by our *Dragoman*, the English interpreter, and the Secretary of the KING (Secretary of State) ; after them followed our secretary, bearing the imperial letters ; and after him, the humble writer of this memoir,

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\* HUGH BOSCAWEN, Esq., Knight Marshal, and Marshal of the Ceremonies.

+ کشی زاده.

with the *mihmándár* on the right, and the lord the master of the ceremonies on the left. On leaving the room, another of the great men, my Lord AYLESFORD,\* came to invite us, and delivered his message ; we moved on and arrived at the door of the *diván* room, where the gentlemen of our suite, the interpreters, and those who accompanied them, opened on both sides to make room for the first chamberlain, who had advanced to meet us. He walked on the right, the *mihmándár* taking the left, and I took the imperial letters (the sources of all favour) into my hands. As we entered the door of the *diván*, the king more than once took his hat in his hand to testify his respect for the imperial credentials. When we reached the centre of the room, His Majesty arose ; and we having come forward to him, made the following speech :—“ The Sublime Porte, actuated by a most ardent desire to confirm and strengthen the edifice of harmony and good understanding, which from of old has been supported on pillars of strength, between the Sublime Porte, of everlasting duration, and the court of England ; and wishing also to further the free and easy passage of merchants and travellers, subjects of both empires, has nominated this well-wishing servant its ambassador extraordinary (*búyúk ilchi*) in order to complete the arrangements for that desirable end, and to augment and strengthen the friendship and sincere feelings of unanimity and concord between the two courts. I trust that, with God’s assistance, general good and reciprocal advantages to the inhabitants of the two empires will result from it ; and that the wishes, which have in view the good end of peace and security, will be fulfilled, through the medium of this humble servant, to the satisfaction of all.”

This speech having been translated by the interpreter, His Majesty replied in the following terms :

“ Being fully aware of the existence, and of the increase of good feeling and friendly inclination on the part of the most distinguished, most noble and powerful PÁDISHÁH of Islám, and most honourable SHÁHINSHÁH (king of kings), it is confirmed by your declaration and assurance, and your embassy is considered as a still further proof of it. Similar feelings being incumbent on our part, the Sublime Porte may rest assured

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\* JAMES ROBERTS, Esq., Lieutenant of the Yeomen ; Lord AYLESFORD, the Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, being absent.

of my earnest desire to strengthen and augment the concord and good understanding which have for ages existed between the two empires. It affords me special satisfaction that you have been chosen for this fortunate and gratifying embassy ; and I beg you will assure His Majesty, the distinguished, noble and victorious PÁDISHÁH of the *Islám*, of my best wishes and sincere desires for the constant increase of his good-fortune, greatness, and honour.”

This speech having been translated by the interpreter of the *díván*, I replied :—“ His Majesty need not at all doubt to reap the fruits of my sincerity.” I then with great respect took the imperial credentials out of the hands of the secretary of the embassy, and said : “ These are the letters (the source of all favour) from His Majesty who adorns the throne of the *Ottomans*, the most glorious, most noble, most illustrious and most powerful PÁDISHÁH, our most gracious lord and master, SULTÁN SELÍM, which manifest his friendship for your Majesty, his illustrious, noble and worthy friend.” I kissed the credentials, and gave them from my own hands into those of the king, who took them in the most respectful manner, and handed them over to my Lord GRENVILLE, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Having in the same manner delivered the letter from His Highness the Grand Vezír, we announced to His Majesty, through our interpreter, the names of the gentlemen of our suite ; and having accomplished the duties of our embassy, we retired and returned. The Secretary of State came after us to tell us that he was commanded by the King to inform us that he was much pleased with the imperial presents, and particularly so with the horses and pistols. I replied : “ The presents of friendship are valued by true friends ; the king’s gracious approbation is as the perfume of musk, and affords us infinite joy and inconceivable pleasure.”

The second chamberlain then came to invite us from Her Majesty the QUEEN. We proceeded in the former order, conducted by her first chamberlain, my Lord BURTON (MORTON?). She arose at our entrance ; and when we had come up to her, we spoke to the following effect :

“ In consequence of the sincere friendship and harmony, existing between the Sublime Porte and the British Empire, His Majesty the most glorious, noble, and powerful PÁDISHÁH, the refuge of the world, my most gracious lord and master, has cherished in his heart a special attachment and friendship for the English Court, and has appointed this

humble servant his ambassador extraordinary, in order to increase this friendship and attachment. Your Majesty's having honoured me with the favour of this flattering audience, is a new proof of increasing friendship and kindness; and I doubt not His Majesty the most glorious, noble, and powerful PÁDISHÁH, will be highly gratified by it."

The QUEEN replied: "I am much obliged to his Majesty the most glorious, noble, and powerful PÁDISHÁH for instituting this welcome and pleasing \* embassy; and the choice having fallen on so auspicious a person as your Excellency,† there is no doubt the friendship which has so long existed between the two empires will, with God's assistance, be strengthened and cemented by the prolongation of your stay." Having read the paper containing this speech, it was translated by the interpreter; and Her Majesty returned thanks verbally, and expressed her satisfaction and pleasure with the imperial presents, particularly with the jewelled aigrette with which her eldest daughter had, through the imperial favour, been distinguished above her equals. She was delighted with it, and her speech overflowed with wishes and prayers for the long life and the increase of the splendour and glory of His Majesty the PÁDISHÁH. I said: "With your permission I will report your satisfaction and gratitude to the Sublime Porte; and His Majesty the most exalted, noble and powerful PÁDISHÁH will derive much pleasure to hear of your noble bearing." She replied: "I will owe this grace to the favour of the ambassador." It was, in truth, a lovely and delightful assembly.‡ After having announced the names of the attendants, my companions, we retired.

In this assembly we observed the great joy and pleasure occasioned by the imperial presents, and in particular by the jewelled aigrettes. The QUEEN stuck hers on the left side next to her heart, and her daughter fixed hers on her head. They looked upon them as talismans of the soul; and shewing them with great exultation to the duchesses and ladies, said: "We have now been declared dignified Sultanas by the Sublime Porte."

Having by the favour and assistance of God, and the blessing of the Lord of the Saints (the prophet), discharged the duties of the embassy in a manner the most dignified and most conducive to the honour of the Sublime Porte, notice was given us that their Majesties desired to see us again.

\* خرم.

+ جناب سعادتگو.

‡ شو قل و سعیتلو بركزل بحلى.

Complying with their request, we attended the *díván* of the king on several occasions, observing the ceremony of wearing the *khorásáni* turban.

The day of the first audience being remarkably fine, and the sun, which had not been seen for forty days, having made its appearance, flattering compliments were addressed to us, explaining this appearance of the sun as an auspicious sign of the good fortune of the Sublime Porte. To this we replied in appropriate terms, by saying, that we had also seen the QUEEN ; and after many flattering words and compliments, we returned home to repose. In very truth, the appearance of the sun on this day was a particular favour of heaven, by which the splendour of the show was heightened and enhanced. There was but one voice amongst the nobility and the people, namely, that so splendid an audience had never been seen. God be praised ! God be praised !

On Thursday, the day after the first audience, we sent by our interpreter to the Prince of WALES, the trifling presents we had prepared for him ; to the Duke of YORK, a horse caparisoned, together with a bow and arrows ; to his lady the Duchess, a parcel of shawls and *a'tr* of roses ; to the third son, a sword and an ornamented musket, together with a bow and arrows ; to the King, the Queen, and six princesses, shawls and *a'tr* of roses, inquiring at the same time after their healths. We also presented the Master of Ceremonies, the Secretary of State, the *nihmándár*, and the Chamberlain, with parcels of shawls ; and others with such presents as were due to their rank ; doing our utmost to support the magnificence and splendour of the Sublime Porte.